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ABSTRACT

An international conference on creole languages and educational development was held at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, from July 24-28, 1972. It was attended by scholars from Africa, Australia, Hawaii, the Caribbean region, the United Kingdom, the United States, and France. The papers presented were descriptions of a wide variety of creoles or recommendations for education and language planning. Most creole language studies are being made in the Caribbean area at the present time, and the majority of the papers dealt with Jamaican and Guyanese creoles and others of that region. Papers were also presented on one Asian creole, Malaccan Creole Portuguese, and the African creoles of West Cameroon, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. Other papers dealt with such subjects as the influence of African-based creole pidgins on American dialects, the concept of pidginization-creolization with reference to Yiddish, the use of pidgin in Nigerian literature, English and Spanish in Puerto Rico, New World English, the acceptability of creolized English in the classroom, and the concept of competence with reference to four texts of children's speech in the Cayo district of British Honduras. (CFM)

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This paper examines the work of a Conference held at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, from July 24 - 28,1972. This Conference was sponsored jointly by the Anthropology and Language Science in Educational Development (ALSED) Programme of UNESCO and the Senate Sub-Committee for Linguistics of the University of the West Indies, assisted by a grant from the Ford Foundation. The Conference was the occasion of the Inaugural Meeting of the Society for Caribbean Linguistics. In preparing this paper I have dipped freely into the official Report presented by Dr. Dennis R. Craig to the sponsors of the Conference and the Society for Caribbean Linguistics, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica.

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CREOLE LANGUAGES AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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The Caribbean basin is well-known as the home and possible birthplace of a large number of Creole languages, both flourishing and obsolete, all of them containing an important European-based component in their lexicon and therefore bearing some likeness to a Dutch, English, French, Portuguese/Spanish, or Spanish parent. To the great names of earlier scholars in the field of Pidgin and Creole languages we must add that of the Black Trinidadian J.J. Thomas whose masterly study of the French-Creole of his own island has recently been reprinted. In later years a renaissance of Creole Language Studies has taken place in different parts of the world and particularly in the West Indies where, at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica, two international conferences on creole languages have been held in 1959 and 1968 respectively*. It was fitting, then, that a third

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* a) Proceedings of the conference on Creole Language Studies (Creole Language Studies) ed. R.B. Le Page, Macmillan, London, 1961

b) Pidginization and Creolization of languages: Proceedings of the conference held at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, April, 1968, ed. Dell Hymes, Cambridge U.P., London, 1971

international conference on a related subject should be held once more in the area under the partial sponsorship of UNESCO, though this time in Trinidad where one of the three beautiful campuses of the West Indies is situated.

In the early fifties scholars working with the Linguistic Survey at the then University College in Jamaica were often thought by impatient journalists to be trying to phase out the more prestigious varieties of English in favour of some neo-colonialist jargon coined in expatriot studies. Scholars were at pains to show that they considered it their main job to seek the facts and make preliminary linguistic analyses. The application of their discoveries would come later and would doubtless be implemented in the new University's education departments, in government education offices and in the classroom. As new areas on the islands and on the mainland acquired nationality and as the University bred its own new scholars it was natural that the approach of scholarship would take new directions. Those engaged in the literacy campaigns increasingly became interested in the possibility of using the native creole language as the vehicle of education and of social and national integration and spoke in terms which would have been unacceptable in the community in the previous generation. They also realised that teachers had been intuitively aware of the uses of the vernacular in fostering the learning process but had lacked the techniques to develop them systematically because of an overall absence of proper training in theoretical and applied linguistics, in sociolinguistics and in the sociology of the language or languages of their own area. A desire to meet together with

representatives of other areas where similar difficulties exist provided the rationale for the Conference on Creole Languages and Educational Development and gained the ready support of all three sponsors.

The conference attracted scholars from many parts of the world, including Africa, Australia and Honolulu as well as the Caribbean region and the United Kingdom, United States of America and France. Regrettably absent were delegates from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union where a small but rich stream of work in language contact has begun to flow.

Perhaps predictably, the papers presented were not overwhelmingly concerned with the practical application of creole language studies and a fair balance was maintained between new, adequate descriptions of a wide variety of creoles and recommendations for education and language planning.

The Conference received only four papers on Asian and African creoles, one South-East Asian creole and three West African creoles. Nothing was offered on such newly recognized creoles as those of Aust[redacted], Papua New Guinea or Colombia and once more I feel that the West Indian Conferences are excessively Atlantic-centred or even West Indian-centred. On the other hand, the Spanish-speaking world continues to preserve a deep silence on the creole languages of their own territories and tends to preserve the myth that offical varieties of their tongue have consistently vanquished all comers. The Luso-Brazilian world which gave us the pioneer work of Coelho, and the

devoted studies of Indo-Portuguese and Sri Lanka Portuguese by Dalgado at the turn of the century and the solid preliminary work on Brazilian dialectology by the late lamented Silva Neto and Mattoso Camara was also notably absent. One would like to see representative from Cape Verde and the Afro-Portuguese enclaves including Fernando Po at future creolist conferences. One would also like to see scholars working on australo-creoles (as spoken by aboriginals) and have the advice of those who have worked on and in the melanesian pidgins and their derivative creoles.

PAPERS AND DISCUSSIONS

The only Asian creole discussed was Malaccan Creole Portuguese. A transformational generative grammar treatment of this creole together with a basic lexicon of about 800 words was given by Dr. I. Hancock of Texas University. This creole is spoken by the part descendants of Portuguese settlers who began to arrive in Malacca in 1509 and survived Dutch domination from 1640 to 1795 and from then, during the British presence until Merdeka. The close relationship to other creoles of the area and to those of the leeward Dutch West Indies prompted considerable discussion on the genetic relationships between various luso-creoles and with other creoles. Some delegates supported the well-known relexification theory whilst others asked whether "the phenomenon of structural similarities between creole languages might not simply be an indication of language universals".

The West African Creoles presented by L. Todd and C.W. Fyle (in absentia) are "English Creoles". Both papers pressed for further

studies in the creoles concerned, that on West Cameroon Creole insisting on the importance of an in-depth constrastive analysis between English and creole in the production of improved school programmes, the assumption of most creole-speakers being that they already spoke English. In the case of Sierra Leone Creole it was suggested that further studies might on the one hand reveal important dissimilarities between creoles, which because of coincidental surface structures appear remarkably alike. On the other hand it was suggested that further detailed study might well give precisely the opposite results. The Cameroon paper analysed the BE-verb and its grammatical categorization whilst the Krio paper dealt with six features of Krio from a set of twelve adduced by Douglas Taylor (v.Hymes, ed. Cambridge,1971). Comparisons between Cameroon and Caribbean English creoles were particularly fruitful in the discussion which followed the presentation of the Cameroon paper.

Dr. T. Vincent's (University of Lagos) paper on the use of pidgin in Nigerian literature spoke of the tradition going back to 19th century abolitionist literature for creole to be used to give authenticity to African characterization and emphasised the difference between this usage and that of certain creative writers of our day and from the deliberate use of pidgin-creole in other writers. Again, on the relexification theory, it was pointed out that the creoles of Sierra Leone and Nigeria vary in such a way as to reflect the influence of different African substrat languages. In discussion the question of similarities between West African and Caribbean English creoles again arose. The use of phonemic spellings, pidgin-creole in schools and

the mass-media was discussed.

The Caribbean area is the area where creole language studies have been most extensively pursued. No papers were presented at this conference from the "French" territories and only one from the "Spanish" islands. The English Caribbean was well represented by descriptive studies and papers were received on suprasegmental phonology from Berry (a distinguished West Africanist), Spears and Allsopp. Berry and Allsopp drew their materials from Jamaican, Barbadian and Guyanese sources and Spears studied pitch and intonation in Cayman English within a brief descriptive account of Cayman Phonology.

"It was suggested that disyllabic as well as monosyllabic words are often semantically distinguished by tone changes in the creoles and middle level of English of at least Jamaica, Guyana and Barbados. In addition, it was shown that there were participant and response signalling devices in these language varieties that were mainly tonal in nature. In Camanian Familiar and to some extent in Cayman Standard speech also, pitch variation was found as the salient feature in environments where only stress variation would exist in English; these pitch variations occurred as a rule within a basic 'downdrift' pattern found also in indigenous languages, Krio, and other English-based pidgins and creoles." (Craig)

The question of whether any of the Caribbean creoles could be regarded as tone languages even though only residual tone appeared to be present was raised.

Cassidy (Wisconsin), one of the editors of the Dictionary of Jamaican English showed that the vast majority of African-derived words in Jamaican Creole could be traced to Twi even though Twi-speakers were not the principalimmigrants during long periods of Jamaican history. It seems certain that there are indeed also significant correspondences between Twi and Jamaican Creole in phonology, phonetaxis and phonology. Cassidy rejected the suggestion that Ife might have made as important if not a greater contribution to Jamaican creole grammar, as Twi at least in its most obvious part, lexion.

A paper by Edwards on Guyanese Creole 'have' and 'be' discussed tense and aspect in the verb, the copula, and its omission. A comparison with Black English was made but in discussion this proved to be an unpopular procedure, a suggestion being made that it might be more appropriate to compare Black English with the Guyanese mesolect than the basilect. It was even asked whether the true Guyanese Creole basilect might not reside with the East Indian element in the population.

Fishman's paper on the concept of pidginization-creolization with reference to Yiddish added a different dimension to discussion of language contacts and change and rang an Australian bell in the ear of one familiar with work on language loss and loyalty carried out by Clyne amongst different kinds of German-speaker in this country.

The paper on English and Spanish in Puerto Rico by Benitez added little of importance to earlier work by Alvarez Nazario or the somewhat controversial Granda. A leading question designed to establish

an African sub-stratum in Puerto Rican nasalization phonetic change and intonation was firmly rejected by Dr. Benitez who also stated that there were no special characteristics of black as distinct from white Puerto Rican speech an assertion which left at least one listener with his doubts.

Dillard's paper on New World English suggested that the technique of comparing the linguistic atlas of North America with that of the British Isles tout court was fraught with error. Without taking into consideration the influence of African-based creole-pidgins on American dialects as a whole we lose sight of important historical and linguistic evidence. Dillard draws attention to the use of Blacks as guides and scouts in the push towards the west and to the widespread use of Black servants in the rearing of children and their influence on general American English especially in plantation life. Here one calls to mind Gilberto Freire's interpretation of Brazilian history in the light of what he sees as the strong African influence on Brazilian social history and on the formation of Brazilian speech.

Allsopp's second paper deals with the acceptability of creolized English in the classroom. An experiment is described in which a sample of teachers (200) was invited to judge the acceptability of individual items in a small representative sample. The experiment tended to show that there is a gradient of acceptability, with idiomatic regionalisms at the more favoured and morphologically problematic items at the less favoured end. In the ensuing discussion it was felt that the removal of the concept of 'standard' from a series including 'formal' and

'informal' would elicit the most useful kind of help from informants. A more thorough survey on the same lines was seen to be a useful tool in language planning.

The nature of the Creole continuum in Jamaican Creole is well known in Le Page and De Camp. One can say briefly that Jamaican speech ranges from the broadest creole type to a formal English much resembling that of Standard British, with or without a local flavour. Most Jamaicans are able to move back and forward for a certain distance along this continuum. Haitians, on the other hand, may be diglots but do not possess a true continuum leading between two extreme types of speech, pure creole and more or less standard French. Bickerton (Hawaii) studies the continuum of Guyana. Noting that there is a continuous transition between creole and English, since ideolects in a single language community can be classified in a hierarchichal order according to their possession of specific English features and absence of corresponding creole features; furthermore English features are shown to occur in ideolects according to a rank-order principle which is the same as the rank order in which Guyanese school children acquire English morpho-syntax. The conclusion was that distinct grammatical systems for Creole and English and the Chomskyan model of homogeneous language are arbitrary fictions.

In discussion the continuum hypothesis was severely questioned by some and Solomon's paper made this point in some detail with suggestions for a suitable analytic technique.

Le Page examined the concept of competence with reference to four

texts of children's speech in the Cayo district of British Honduras. Competence is defined in the paper as having available a code. It is germinal rather than mechanically systematic; there is no single linguistic system which speakers 'internalize' and no external norms, that speakers as they go along are weighing up their chances of being accepted in one or another role and creating for themselves the stereotypes for these roles. In the discussion which followed someone asked what the speaker's grammar would look like; he replied that this was the wrong kind of question as the preliminary obsession with grammars caused several important facets of the language situation to be ignored. Some delegates were not satisfied with this reply and insisted that norms really did exist. In his comments on criticisms of his theory of competence and their pedagogical implications Le Page pointed out that his paper was concerned with what was happening to language in a society and with problems of language teaching.

In a paper on the significance of some communication differences Craig "examined the fact that the literature on age-developmental language differences after the early childhood stage, on social-class language differences in British and American schoolchildren and on language differences between creole and standard speakers generally referred to a common set of language features as being the focal point of communication differences". These features included high-order classes of adjectives and verbs and certain other transformationally derived language features. It was argued that in a theory consistent with the transformational generative conception of the nature of

language, these language features would become externally realised in a certain hierarchy along a scale of earlier/later lexical formation and output. The conclusion was that the relevant types of age-development, social-class generally, and creole/standard language differences all derived from the same source: tendencies to early/late lexification in different speakers and for different speakers and for different reasons; lower social and creole-influenced speakers tended to lexify earlier than upper social and standard speakers.

In discussion some delegates were uneasy about the implications of this argument and insisted that language abilities were purely subjective and felt that the paper gave evidence that all children could process the same underlying meanings, but tended to select different linguistic methods of processing and with different output results.

Some of the papers already mentioned dealt incidentally with certain educational implications in their conclusions. Others dealt more specifically with problems involving linguistics and sociolinguistics in education. Shuy reported on the often unfortunate influence of linguistics in education. However with the new interest in sociolinguistics it seems likely that this branch of our discipline will play a more important role in the classroom than structural and generative descriptive linguistics. The required strategies to be taken into account and some examples of existant sociolinguistic school programmes were commented upon and discussed. Some felt that

academics alone may not be basically the right people to bring the new emphasis into the classroom. Shuy's views on the application of sociolinguistics in the teaching of reading and language-teaching in urban dialect situations created keen interest.

On the question of orthographies there seems to be a swing away from the phonemic transcriptions which were fashionable not long ago. De Camp argued that as graphemes may serve for many "standard" forms of speech they may also be used for their creole derivatives. He even drew the conclusion that standard spelling is close to optimal for all varieties of English including creole. Creole speakers may still use this orthography in reading and writing while retaining their own pronunciation. There no longer seems to be any point, linguistic or economic, to devise special orthographies for 'black' English, English-creole and non-standard speakers. Most delegates seemed to accept these views and it was remarked that to creole speakers it was more important to <u>read</u> than to speak English.

Cave's paper on measuring linguistic maturity provoked criticisms of the very concept of linguistic maturity. It discussed research on hesitation phenomena and 'mazes' in speech and suggested that the production by creole-influenced children of a string of nouns with sentence intonation contours, but without attached verbals, is a similar phenomenon. Such strings of nouns have been found to differentiate lower social classes, i.e. predominantly creole-speaking, children from upper social class, i.e. mainly English speaking children in creole English situations.

Figueroa's paper took a traditionalist's non-linguistic view of a number of samples of writing and speech of children and adults in the English-speaking Caribbean. He saw there little more than defective, imprecise English and doubted the validity of the system-descriptive techniques of the linguists and their utility of the pedagogue. Figueroa's approach was not surprisingly widely rejected and it was pointed out to him that similar languages could be found in other varieties of English and that in the varieties of his samples there was still considerable regularity.. Still choosing to record creole features as manifestations of sub-standard English he felt that a greater use of poetry and fiction in language teaching could help to eliminate the "confusion" of English-speakers in the Caribbean.

Reports prepared by the Conference's Commissions for research priorities and educational development have been included in Dr. Craig's Report.

APPENDIX

Participants who submitted papers and the titles of their papers

ALLSOPP, S.R.R., College of Arts and Science, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados.

1) Some Suprasegmental Features of Caribbean English and Their Relevance in the Classroom

2) The Problem of Acceptability in Caribbean Creolised English.

BENITEZ, Carmen, C.M., Depto de Administracion Comercial, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico.

El Ingles y el Espagnol en Puerto Rico, 1972

BERRY, J. Dept. of Linguistics, Northwestern University, Evanstown, Illinois 60201, U.S.A.

Some Observations on Residual Tone in West Indian English

BICKERTON, D. Dept. of Linguistics, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822.

System into System

CASSIDY, F.G., Dept. of English, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, U.S.A.

Comparison of Certain Elements in Twi and Jamaican Creole

CAVE, G.N., Dept. of English, University of Guyana, Georgetown, Guyana.

Measuring Linguistic Maturity: Case for The Norm Stream

CRAIG, D.R., School of Education, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica.

Intra-Lingual Differences, Communication And Language Theory

DeCAMP, D., Dept. of Linguistics, University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712, U.S.A.

Standard English Books and Creole-Speaking Children: A Linguistic Appraisal

DILLARD, J.L., Dept. of English, Faculty of Humanities, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico.

White Through Black: The Neglected Side of New World Communication Patterns

EDWARDS, W., Dept. of English, University of Guyana, Georgetown, Guyana.

'Have' and 'Be' in Guyanese Creole

FIGUEROA, J., School of Education, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica.

Some Notes Towards Clearing the Ground Together With Samples of Language Occurring in the Creole Context

FISHMAN, J.A., Dept. of Psychology, Yeshiva University, 55, Fifth Avenue, New York, 10003, U.S.A.

The Phenomenological And Linguistic Pilgrimage of Yiddish

FYLE, C.W., Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone

Grammatical Differences and Apparent Differences of Creoles

HANCOCK, I., Dept. of Linguistics, University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712, U.S.A.

Malacca Créole Portuguese

LePAGE, R.B., Dept. of Language, University of York, Heslington, York England.

The Concept of Competence in a Creole/Contact Situation

SHUY, R.W., Dept. of Linguistics, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., 20007, U.S.A.

Strategies for Implementing Sociolinguistic Change in the Schools

SOLOMON, D., Dept. of French, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad.

Form - Content and the Creole Continuum

SPEARS, R., Dept. of Linguistics, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois 60201, U.S.A.

Pitch and Intonation in Caymanian English

TODD, Loreto, Institute of Modern English Language Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, England.

The 'Be'-Verb in Cameroon Pidgin

VINCENT, T., Dept. of English, University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria.

Pidgin in Nigerian Literature